



Community Newsletter 2004

Pre-Season Fire & Fuels Information

What's Planned This Summer?

The fire and fuels management program at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks wants to be a good neighbor by sharing information with local communities about upcoming projects.

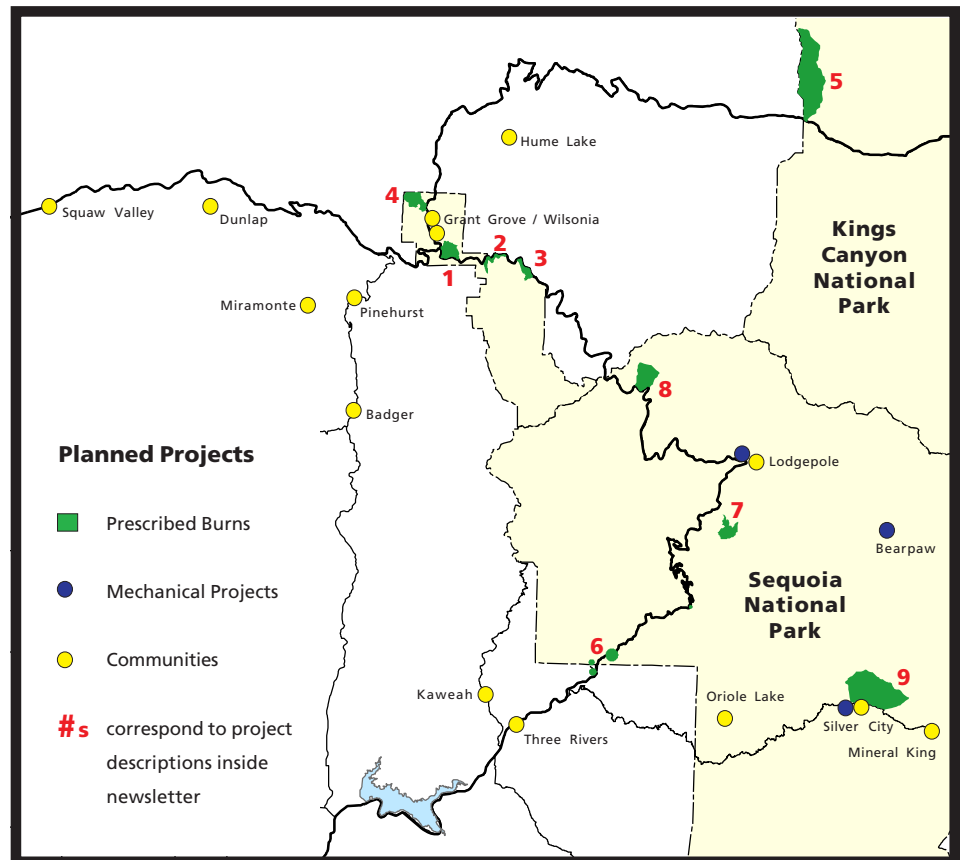
We are planning **12 projects** this year totaling **4,056 acres** (nine are burn projects and three are mechanical projects). The map to the right shows the project locations in relation to fourteen local communities.

Find your community on the map. Based on where you live, you might want detailed information about certain projects. Open this newsletter to learn more about size, objectives, and timing. Remember, the timing of burns depends on air quality, local fire activity, fuel moistures, and weather.

The goal of the fire and fuels management program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon is to protect both ecosystems and communities. This important work is accomplished by restoring fire's natural role in the environment and by reducing hazardous fuels. Each year, managers choose prescribed burns and mechanical fuel reduction projects that will help accomplish goals.

What's Not Planned?

Unlike the planned projects described in this newsletter, lightning fires occur each year at unexpected times and locations. NPS crews are trained to respond quickly in these situations as they did last year with nearly 50 lightning fires. If necessary, we are ready to shift priorities again this year from planned projects to the suppression or management of lightning fires.



Reducing Your Exposure to Smoke

In the foothills of the southern Sierra Nevada, smoke is an unfortunate reality. Whether it is present from an uncontrolled wildfire or a planned prescribed burn, here are a few simple guidelines to reduce your exposure:

Stay indoors as much as possible when smoke is present. Avoid physical exertion.

Close windows, doors, and outside vents when it is smoky.

Drink lots of water, eat a balanced diet, and get adequate rest.

Be diligent about taking any medicines prescribed by your doctor.

Consult the local Air Quality Index (AQI) on TV or in newspapers for assistance in planning your daily activities.

Consult your physician if, after following these guidelines, you still experience difficulty breathing.

For more detailed information about smoke, go to www.nps.gov/seki/fire/portal/portal.htm



Prescribed Fires in Kings Canyon National Park

1 Grant G

Size & Timing:

252 acres / early summer

Objectives:

To restore natural fire and reduce fuels to create a protective buffer for private residences and government buildings.

Location:

Southeast side of Wilsonia and other developments in Grant Grove.

Vegetation:

Mixed conifer forest.

Highlights:

This project also provides protection for the Park Ridge Lookout.

2 & 3 Quail Flat & Buena Vista

Size & Timing:

110 acres and 133 acres / summer

Objectives:

To reduce fuels along the Generals Highway corridor and restore healthy forest conditions.

Location:

South of Generals Highway in Redwood Canyon.

Vegetation:

Mixed conifer (with a few giant sequoias in the Quail Flat unit).

Highlights:

In the 1970s and 1980s, the parks ignited numerous prescribed burns in the Redwood Canyon area. After more than two decades, fire managers want to maintain the positive changes that occurred with those first prescribed burns. With the completion of these two units as “anchors,” crews will be able to initiate other nearby projects in upcoming years. (See blue box above.)

He Really Sticks with a Project!

Edward Nelson was a fire management employee in these parks for 35 years. In 1970, he was part of the crew that ignited the first Quail Flat prescribed burn near Redwood Mountain. This year, Ed will be on scene for the Quail Flat reburn to continue the restoration effort he started 34 years ago.



This photo shows Edward Nelson (second from the right) and co-workers at the Ash Mountain helibase in 1968. Since his retirement in 2000, Ed remains involved with the fire program as a private contractor.

4 Grant West I

Size & Timing:

283 acres / after Labor Day

Objectives:

To reduce fuels and maintain healthy forest conditions.

Location:

Northwest corner of the Grant Grove area (northwest of Grant Tree).

Vegetation:

Mixed conifer with a few giant sequoias.

Highlights:

This unit is a collection of smaller burn units that were ignited between 1990 and 1992. This year's burn will consume the dead and down material created by the first fire and will mimic the frequent natural fire cycle in this area.

5 Lewis Creek

Size & Timing:

1,000 acres / after October 1st

Objectives:

To maintain healthy forest conditions.

Location:

Lewis Creek drainage, north of the South Fork of the Kings River near Cedar Grove.

Vegetation:

Mixed conifer.

Highlights:

The parks have already treated 4,600 acres in the Lewis Creek drainage using prescribed fire in the late 1990's. This project will complete restoration efforts in this drainage. In the future, managers will rely on lightning-caused fires here to maintain natural conditions.

Prescribed Fires in Sequoia National Park

6 Ash Mountain / Hospital Rock

- Size & Timing:** 25 acres / late spring
- Objectives:** To create defensible space around buildings near park headquarters and a popular public picnic area.
- Location:** Middle Fork of the Kaweah River drainage.
- Vegetation:** Grass, scattered brush, and oak woodland.
- Highlights:** This project includes mechanical treatments (cutting brush and thinning) as well as igniting small prescribed fires (averaging approximately two acres in size). In addition to hazard fuel reduction, these burns are used as important training exercises for new wildland firefighters.

7 Tharps

- Size & Timing:** 257 acres / summer
- Objectives:** To reduce fuels, maintain healthy forest conditions, and stimulate giant sequoia reproduction.
- Location:** In the center of Giant Forest, east of the Generals Highway, and north of Crescent and Log Meadows.
- Vegetation:** Giant sequoia / mixed conifer forest.
- Highlights:** Crews plan to finish the last 257 acres of a prescribed fire that was only partially ignited last summer. Research shows that giant sequoia groves survived regular fires throughout history, every 5-20 years on average. This burn is an important link in maintaining the natural fire cycle in Giant Forest.

8 Cabin Meadow

- Size & Timing:** 441 acres / summer
- Objectives:** To restore fire to the ecosystem and reduce hazardous fuels.
- Location:** North Fork of the Kaweah River drainage, north of Generals Highway (near Dorst Campground).
- Vegetation:** Mixed conifer forest.
- Highlights:** This project takes advantage of beneficial effects from the Dorst Fire of 1996. These areas will become “anchors” for future projects near the park boundary and Lost Grove.

9 Highbridge

- Size & Timing:** 1,517 acres / after October 1st
- Objectives:** To reduce fuels and provide protection for private property.
- Location:** East Fork drainage of the Kaweah River, north of Silver City.
- Vegetation:** Mixed conifer forest / red fir.
- Highlights:** This project is east of the Atwood Prescribed Fire completed in early July 2003. It is part of a major effort to provide protection for local communities and park visitors using the Mineral King area.



Mechanical Work

The parks plan to complete three mechanical fuel reduction projects this summer, all in Sequoia National Park. The projects are designed to protect residents and structures from wildfire by mechanically thinning /removing excess fuels, and piling them for later burning.

The first two projects below will utilize private contractors for labor. Park employees will work on the Bearpaw project.

Silver City - 20 acres

This project will extend the buffer created around the community two years ago to a distance of 400 feet.

Lodgepole - 10 acres

This project is south of Wuksachi Lodge and is the second phase of an effort to reduce fuels in the Lodgepole area.

Bearpaw - 8 acres

This is the third year of an effort to reduce fuels around this popular backcountry concession facility.



Park firefighters burning slash piles in the winter after mechanical fuel reduction.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651

Standard Mail G-83
U.S. Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of the Interior

INSIDE

List of Planned Projects for 2004



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Writer / Editor
Jody Lyle

Park Superintendent
Richard H. Martin

Fire Management Officer
William Kaage

Fuels Specialist
Benjamin Jacobs

GIS Specialist
Karen Folger

For More Information
Fire Information and Education Specialist
(559) 565-3703
www.nps.gov/seki/fire/fireinfo/current.htm

About this Newsletter
This bi-annual newsletter is designed to provide accurate fire information for the residents of local communities near Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

Postal Customer
Three Rivers, CA 93271

NPS Fire & Fuels Management



Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks hire approximately 50 seasonal firefighters each year. These men and women work tirelessly to suppress unwanted fires, ignite prescribed burns, manage lightning-caused fires, complete mechanical fuel reduction projects around communities, provide public education, and engage in research and monitoring. Despite their busy schedules, they will always take a moment to talk about their work with park visitors or local residents. The next time you see a firefighter from the parks, ask them what they've been up to lately!